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## MONTHS AND DAYS IN BABYLONIAN-ASSYRIAN ASTROLOGY

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The practical efficiency of any system of divination is dependent upon securing as large a number as possible of different signs and, correspondingly, an extensive series of varying interpretations. In the case of Babylonian-Assyrian astrology this object was in large measure accomplished by parceling out the observed signs among the four countries, Akkad, Subartu or Guti, Elam, and Amurru, representing South, North, East, and West respectively. So, e.g., the right side of the moon was assigned to Akkad, the left side to Elam, the upper part to Amurru, the lower part to Subartu.<sup>1</sup> The four countries Akkad, Elam, Amurru, and Subartu furnish the basis for the title *šar kibrat arba'im* assumed by Sargon and Naram-Sin as Ungnad recognized<sup>2</sup> and as pointed out also by me.<sup>3</sup> The occasional substitution of Guti for Subartu is a proof of the composite character of the *Enuma Anu-Enlil* series, the tablets of which date from various periods.<sup>4</sup>

Occasionally only three countries are introduced. So in the case of the division of the ecliptic into the way of Anu, of Enlil, and of Ea, the central division was assigned to Akkad—a reflection of Enlil's headship of the older pantheon—Anu to Elam and Ea to Amurru.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, there being only three watches for the night, only three countries could be taken into consideration, the first watch being assigned to Akkad (Thompson, No. 270, rev. 11), the third to Elam (Thompson, No. 181, obv. 6; 242, rev. 2; 271, obv. 10; 274 F, obv. 7) and the middle watch, therefore, to Amurru

<sup>1</sup> II R. 49 No. 1, obv. 23-26 = CT, xxvi, 40, Col. iv, 23-26 restored by Virolleaud, *Babyloniaca*, III, 135, according to Thompson, *Reports*, No. 268. See also Pinches, *PSBA*, V, 74, and Hagen and Delitzsch, *BA*, II, 245 and 272.

<sup>2</sup> *Urkunden aus Dilbat*, 18, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See the writer's article "The Hittites in Babylonia," *RS*, 1909, 92, n. 32. I reached the conclusion independently of Ungnad. See also Hilprecht, *BE*, Series D, Vol. V, Fasc. 1, p. 24, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See Jastrow, II, 505, 507, etc., and a forthcoming paper of the writer on "The *Anu-Enlil* Series" in *JAOS*.

<sup>5</sup> Virolleaud, *L'astrologie chaldéenne*, "Ishtar," No. IV. See Jastrow, II, 625.

or at some periods to Guti.<sup>6</sup> When as in the case of the horns of the moon only two sides were singled out, the number was correspondingly reduced to two, the right side being Amurru, and the left side assigned to Elam.<sup>7</sup>

Whenever possible, however, all four countries were brought in, and, according as a sign was associated with the one country or the other, the interpretation was made to bear upon the country either directly or by implication. In accord with this principle the twelve months of the ordinary year were parceled out in this way. This is indicated by explanatory remarks added to the signs both in the omen collections and in the quotations from these collections in the astrological reports and letters. Thus we find the second month Airu assigned to Elam (Thompson, No. 274 F, obv. 6), the third month Sivan to Amurru (No. 67, obv. 3; 156, rev. 1; 270, rev. 11; 271, obv. 10; Harper, *Assyrian Letters*, No. 38, rev. 4); the fourth month Du'uzu to Subartu (Thompson, No. 36, rev. 2), the fifth month to Akkad (Thompson, No. 17, rev. 4), the tenth month Tebet to Elam (No. 76, obv. 4), the eleventh month Shebat to Amurru (No. 160 B, rev. 1).

The astrological "commentary" text II R. 49, No. 1, furnishes the assignment of the various months to the different countries, and now that an improved edition of this important text is at our disposal,<sup>8</sup> the list can be completed with the aid of the indications in the reports and letters. The preserved portions of this list<sup>9</sup> furnish the following equations:

Airu = Elam  
Kislev = Akkad  
Tebet = Elam  
Tašrit and Shebat = Amurru  
Araḫšamna and Adar = Subartu

The agreement in the case of three of these months—Elam, Tebet, and Shebat—with the notes in the reports and letters shows conclusively that the list furnishes the basis for the references in the reports. We may, therefore, supplement the list as follows

<sup>6</sup> See Jastrow, II, 551.

<sup>7</sup> Jastrow, II, 502, n. 4; and the writer's article "Babylonian-Orientation" (*ZA*, XXIII, 199 f.).

<sup>8</sup> K 253 with duplicates KK 4195 and 8067 published by King, *CT*, XXVI, Pl. 40-44.

<sup>9</sup> *CT*, XXVI, 40, Col. VI, 8-15, *a-b*.

for the third, fourth, and fifth months = Amurru, Subartu, and Akkad respectively. Combining the two we obtain:

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| (second month)   | Airu = Elam         |
| (third month)    | Sivan = Amurru      |
| (fourth month)   | Du'uzu = Subartu    |
| (fifth month)    | Ab = Akkad          |
| (seventh month)  | Tashrit = Amurru    |
| (eighth month)   | Arahšamna = Subartu |
| (ninth month)    | Kislev = Akkad      |
| (tenth month)    | Tebet = Elam        |
| (eleventh month) | Shebat = Amurru     |
| (twelfth month)  | Adar = Subartu      |

The principle of apportionment being evidently the division of the twelve months into three groups of four months each, and the order in each group being Akkad, Elam, Amurru, and Subartu, there is no difficulty in supplying, for the missing first month, Nisan = Akkad, and for the sixth month, Ulul = Elam. The latter equation is moreover borne out by Thompson, No. 30, rev. 6, where an eclipse of the sixth month is applied to Elam.

Lines 12-15 of Col. VI of K 250 (*CT*, XXVI, 40) are therefore to be filled out as follows:

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| First, fifth, ninth months      | = Akkad   |
| Second, sixth, tenth months     | = Elam    |
| Third, seventh, eleventh months | = Amurru  |
| Fourth, eighth, twelfth months  | = Subartu |

The question now arises whether the same apportionment holds good for the days of the month.

The fourteenth day is consistently applied to Elam (Thompson, No. 274 F; 271, obv. 10; Harper, *Assyrian Letters*, No. 38, rev. 3—based on Virolleaud, *Sin*, No. III, 109) while from No. 156, rev. 2, and 160 B, rev. 2, we learn that the fifteenth day = Amurru.

This would correspond to the apportionment of the days in groups of four as follows:

|                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29  | = Akkad   |
| 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26, 30 | = Elam    |
| 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27     | = Amurru  |
| 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28     | = Subartu |

In agreement with this Virolleaud, Sin, No. III, 108-13, and IV, 2-10, furnishes the equations:

|                  |                                     |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| First day        | = Akkad (favorable)                 |
| Thirteenth day   | = Akkad (unfavorable)               |
| Sixteenth day    | = Subartu (favorable) <sup>10</sup> |
| Seventeenth day  | = Akkad (favorable)                 |
| Nineteenth day   | = Amurru (favorable)                |
| Twenty-ninth day | = Akkad (favorable)                 |

It must not, of course, be supposed that *everything* that happens on any of the days in question applies to the corresponding country. The fourteenth day, e.g., being the normal and therefore lucky day for the opposition between moon and sun, furnishes, according to varying conditions under which the full moon appears, a large number of favorable interpretations<sup>11</sup> applying to Babylonia and therefore by extension to Assyria. The Babylonian and Assyrian *barû*-priests were careful enough to limit the apportionment of the months to decidedly unfavorable phenomena, particularly to eclipses or darkening of the moon's (or sun's) surface<sup>12</sup> and to the disappearance of the moon at the end of the month; and the same holds good for the days. It is hardly a matter of accident that references to the assignment to months are so much more frequent in the reports and collections than are those to days, and we may conclude from this that the apportionment of days to countries was less frequently resorted to. It is obvious, too, that such a theoretical system could not be consistently applied without soon bringing the system into disrepute.

Lastly, it is to be noted as a further evidence of the composite character of the "Anu-Enlil" series that we have one tablet reflecting apparently earlier conditions<sup>13</sup> than those marked by the division of the world into the four countries Akkad, Elam, Amurru, Subartu, in which we find a somewhat different assignment. The tablet, which is of unusual historical interest because of its important references to political occurrences, interprets the eclipse of the moon in the various months of the year as follows:

<sup>10</sup> But twentieth day = Akkad (favorable) and Amurru (unfavorable); twenty-eighth day = Akkad (favorable); eighteenth day = Amurru (favorable) and Akkad (unfavorable).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Thompson, *Reports*, Nos. 124-55.

<sup>12</sup> *Atalû* is applied indiscriminately in the astrological texts to a genuine eclipse of moon or sun or to any obscuration of the moon's or sun's surface through atmospheric causes. See Jastrow, II, 513 f.

<sup>13</sup> Virolleaud, Sin, No. XXXIII. See Jastrow, II, 553 f. and 559, n. 4.

- (second month) Airu = Elam
- (third month) Sivan = Tilmun
- (fourth month) Du'uzu = Guti
- (fifth month) Ab = Akkad (but also Tupliaš and Hittites)<sup>14</sup>
- (sixth month) Ulul = Akkad
- (seventh month) Tašrit = Elam
- (tenth month) Tebet = Anšan
- (eleventh month) Shebat = Amurru
- (twelfth month) Adar = šar kiššati

The second, fifth, and eleventh months agree with the later apportionment, and, since Anšan is identical with Elam, the equation for the tenth month also fits in with the later scheme which substitutes the more common designation for the lands to the East. Tilmun, playing no part in subsequent periods, is replaced by Amurru, and if we may regard šar kiššati as a substitution made by the Assyrian copyist of this old tablet for Subartu,<sup>15</sup> which in the group of four takes the place of Assyria as the earlier designation of the district or districts to the north, we would also bring the equation for the twelfth month into the scheme, but the assignment of the seventh month to Elam instead of to Amurru marks a departure which would seem to show that at the time of the composition of this tablet, the conventional scheme had not yet been fully marked out. Besides, consistent consistency is the last thing to be looked for in any system of ancient divination.<sup>16</sup> It is essential for the practical workings of any such system to be elastic. Without such elasticity it defeats its own purpose by prematurely revealing the weak supports upon which it rests.

<sup>14</sup> See the writer's article "The Hittites in Babylonia," *RS*, 1909, 87-96.

<sup>15</sup> That the later Assyrian scribes took liberties of this kind is perfectly natural. So the eighth month Arahšamna, assigned in the scheme to Subartu, is described in a comment in Thompson, No. 183, rev. 1, as arḫu ša šarri be-li-ia šu-u "the month of the king my lord," which rests on the identification of this month with Subartu = Assyria. According to VR, 43, obv. 40 the eighth month is the festival of Dungi, which may have been an additional factor in prompting the Assyrian scribes to connect the month directly with the king.

<sup>16</sup> So e.g. in some sections of the Anu-Enlil series the four directions of the heavens are parceled out as follows:

South = Elam  
North = Akkad  
East = Subartu or Guti  
West = Amurru

while in others we find:

North = Guti  
East = Elam  
West = Amurru  
South = Akkad

The latter division is geographical, the former rests on association of ideas, south being unfavorable, north favorable, though we also find South = Akkad and North = Elam. See Jastrow, II, 507 and n. 2. To the references there given add Thompson, No. 271, obv. 10, North = Akkad.